



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE of PLANNING AND RESEARCH
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT



CYNTHIA BRYANT
DIRECTOR

January 29, 2008

JAN 31 2008

Jim D.
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Colorado Desert District
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Subject: Piedras Grandes Road Closure
SCH#: 2007121160

Dear Jim D.:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. On the enclosed Document Details Report please note that the Clearinghouse has listed the state agencies that reviewed your document. The review period closed on January 28, 2008, and the comments from the responding agency (ies) is (are) enclosed. If this comment package is not in order, please notify the State Clearinghouse immediately. Please refer to the project's ten-digit State Clearinghouse number in future correspondence so that we may respond promptly.

Please note that Section 21104(c) of the California Public Resources Code states that:

"A responsible or other public agency shall only make substantive comments regarding those activities involved in a project which are within an area of expertise of the agency or which are required to be carried out or approved by the agency. Those comments shall be supported by specific documentation."

These comments are forwarded for use in preparing your final environmental document. Should you need more information or clarification of the enclosed comments, we recommend that you contact the commenting agency directly.

This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Please contact the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts
Director, State Clearinghouse

Enclosures
cc: Resources Agency

**Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base**

SCH# 2007121160
Project Title Piedras Grandes Road Closure
Lead Agency Parks and Recreation, Department of

Type Neg Negative Declaration

Description Approximately 560 acres of the Piedras Grandes region in southern Anza-Borrego Desert State Park would be closed to motorized vehicles and overnight camping to protect sensitive cultural resources. The area would still be open for day use hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian activity. The existing jeep road leading into Piedras Grandes, at its junction with the dirt road leading to Dos Cabezas Spring, would be closed to motorized vehicle traffic, and the jeep road converted to a recreational trail. A small parking area would be created at this road intersection. Interpretive signs and/or displays would be placed to educate the public on the significance and sensitivity of the area.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Jim D.
Agency California Department of Parks and Recreation
Phone 760-767-3074 **Fax**
email
Address Colorado Desert District
200 Palm Canyon Drive
City Borrego Springs **State** CA **Zip** 92004

Project Location

County San Diego
City
Region
Cross Streets Interstate 8 and County Road S-2
Parcel No.
Township 16S **Range** 8E **Section** 33,34, **Base**

Proximity to:

Highways S-2
Airports
Railways
Waterways
Schools
Land Use Anza-Borrego Desert State Park General Plan Designations: road proposed for closure, "backcountry use," rest of the 560 acres, State Wilderness.

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Agricultural Land; Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Geologic/Seismic; Minerals; Noise; Population/Housing Balance; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Toxic/Hazardous; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Wildlife; Landuse; Cumulative Effects

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Department of Conservation; Department of Fish and Game, Region 5; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 11; Air Resources Board, Transportation Projects; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 9; Native American Heritage Commission

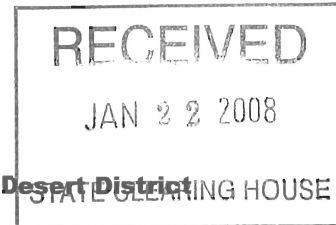
Date Received 12/28/2007 **Start of Review** 12/28/2007 **End of Review** 01/28/2008

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

915 CAPITOL MALL, ROOM 364
 SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
 (916) 653-6251
 Fax (916) 657-5390
 Web Site www.nahc.ca.gov
 e-mail: ds_nahc@pacbell.net



January 16, 2008



Mr. Jim Dice, Senior Environmental Scientist

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION; Colorado Desert District

200 Palm Canyon Drive
 Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Re: SCH#2007121160; CEQA Notice of Completion; Initial Study/Negative Declaration for a Proposed Piedras
 Grandes Road Closure Project; California Department of Parks & Rec.; Imperial, Riverside and San Diego Counties,
 California

Dear Mr. Dice.

The Native American Heritage Commission is the state agency designated to protect California's Native American Cultural Resources. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that any project that causes a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource, that includes archaeological resources, is a 'significant effect' requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) per the California Code of Regulations §15064.5(b)(c) (CEQA guidelines). Section 15382 of the 2007 CEQA Guidelines defines a significant impact on the environment as "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of physical conditions within an area affected by the proposed project, including ... objects of historic or aesthetic significance." In order to comply with this provision, the lead agency is required to assess whether the project will have an adverse impact on these resources within the 'area of potential effect (APE)', and if so, to mitigate that effect. To adequately assess the project-related impacts on historical resources, the Commission recommends the following action:

✓ Contact the appropriate California Historic Resources Information Center (CHRIS) for possible 'recorded sites' in locations where the development will or might occur. Contact information for the Information Center nearest you is available from the State Office of Historic Preservation (916/653-7278)/ <http://www.ohp.parks.ca.gov>. The record search will determine:

- If a part or the entire APE has been previously surveyed for cultural resources.
- If any known cultural resources have already been recorded in or adjacent to the APE.
- If the probability is low, moderate, or high that cultural resources are located in the APE.
- If a survey is required to determine whether previously unrecorded cultural resources are present.
- ✓ If an archaeological inventory survey is required, the final stage is the preparation of a professional report detailing the findings and recommendations of the records search and field survey.
- The final report containing site forms, site significance, and mitigation measures should be submitted immediately to the planning department. All information regarding site locations, Native American human remains, and associated funerary objects should be in a separate confidential addendum, and not be made available for public disclosure.
- The final written report should be submitted within 3 months after work has been completed to the appropriate regional archaeological Information Center.
- ✓ Contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) for:
 - * A Sacred Lands File (SLF) search of the project area and information on tribal contacts in the project vicinity that may have additional cultural resource information. Please provide this office with the following citation format to assist with the Sacred Lands File search request: USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle citation with name, township, range and section.
- The NAHC advises the use of Native American Monitors to ensure proper identification and care given cultural resources that may be discovered. The NAHC recommends that contact be made with Native American Contacts on the attached list to get their input on potential project impact (APE). In some cases, the existence of a Native American cultural resources may be known only to a local tribe(s).
- ✓ Lack of surface evidence of archeological resources does not preclude their subsurface existence.
- Lead agencies should include in their mitigation plan provisions for the identification and evaluation of accidentally discovered archeological resources, per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) §15064.5 (f). In areas of identified archaeological sensitivity, a certified archaeologist and a culturally affiliated Native American, with knowledge in cultural resources, should monitor all ground-disturbing activities.
- A culturally-affiliated Native American tribe may be the only source of information about a Sacred Site/Native American cultural resource.
- Lead agencies should include in their mitigation plan provisions for the disposition of recovered artifacts, in consultation with culturally affiliated Native Americans.

✓ Lead agencies should include provisions for discovery of Native American human remains or unmarked cemeteries in their mitigation plans.

* CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5(d) requires the lead agency to work with the Native Americans identified by this Commission if the initial Study identifies the presence or likely presence of Native American human remains within the APE. CEQA Guidelines provide for agreements with Native American, identified by the NAHC, to assure the appropriate and dignified treatment of Native American human remains and any associated grave liens.

✓ Health and Safety Code §7050.5, Public Resources Code §5097.98 and Sec. §15064.5 (d) of the California Code of Regulations (CEQA Guidelines) mandate procedures to be followed, including that construction or excavation be stopped in the event of an accidental discovery of any human remains in a location other than a dedicated cemetery until the county coroner or medical examiner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. . Note that §7052 of the Health & Safety Code states that disturbance of Native American cemeteries is a felony.

✓ Lead agencies should consider avoidance, as defined in §15370 of the California Code of Regulations (CEQA Guidelines), when significant cultural resources are discovered during the course of project planning and implementation

Please feel free to contact me at (916) 653-6251 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Dave Singleton
Program Analyst

Attachment: List of Native American Contacts

Cc: State Clearinghouse



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Colorado Desert District
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Ruth G. Coleman, *Director*

March 4, 2008

Mr. Dave Singleton
Program Analyst
Native American Heritage Commission
915 Capitol Mall, Room 364
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Response to Comments
Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND)
Piedras Grandes Road Closure Project
Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
SCH#2007121160

Dear Mr. Singleton:

Thank you for your letter of January 16, 2008, on behalf of the Native American Heritage Commission, regarding the above project.

The information below has been prepared by Joan S. Schneider, Ph.D., Associate State Archeologist. I hope that it will answer any questions you might have.

The road closure project is specifically proposed to protect significant cultural resources in the Piedras Grandes area of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Native American consultation started before the initiation of this project and continues to the present. Several field trips to the closure area for Native American representatives of local reservations have taken place. A presentation on the proposed road closure was made, early in the project planning, to a meeting of the Kumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee (KCRC) before plans for the road closure were made. All Native American input supported the road closure.

A review of the basis upon which the project is proposed follows:

- A cultural resource inventory of the area had been carried out in 1996-1997. That inventory confirmed that the Piedras Grandes region has a high concentration of cultural resources, some of which are highly sensitive.
- In 2005, due to reports and observations of visitor impacts in the area, a study was conducted to document these impacts. A recommendation was made for closure of the jeep trail through the area and for closure of the area to overnight camping.
- The closure will prevent ready access, by automobile, to sensitive cultural resource areas, both within and along the road into Piedras Grandes. This, along with the prohibition of overnight camping, is expected to prevent further degradation of the cultural resources.

Should the NAHC wish more information about the Piedras Grandes area, the results of the studies mentioned above, or any further clarification, please contact me or Dr. Schneider at the above address.

Sincerely,

Gail Sevens
Acting Environmental Coordinator

Dice, Jim

From: Donnelly, Tom SPAWAR [tom.donnelly@navy.mil]
Sent: Wednesday, January 23, 2008 11:43 AM
To: Dice, Jim
Subject: Piedras Grandes road closure comments

To: Jim Dice

Thank-you for this opportunity to comment on the road closure.

1) It surprises me that nothing has been done in the past to protect the horse & rider pictograph. It has been damaged numerous times over the decades.

Even with the road closure there should be a sign placed inside the rock cave saying something like: "Please don't damage the unique art". If the sign were bolted to the rock on the ground under the art, it would only be visible to people who are already looking at the pictograph.

2) There are two main campsites along this road. One is about 1/2 mile out the road and is right next to the pictograph and should definitely be closed.

The other campsite is only about 100 yards out the road. If that campsite is not a significant cultural site, then it should be kept open and the road only closed beyond that point.

That would also save the park from having to build a new parking area at the intersection of Piedras Grandes road and the main dirt road.

sincerely,
Tom Donnelly



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Colorado Desert District
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Ruth G. Coleman, *Director*

March 4, 2008

Mr. Tom Donnelly
4283 Feather Avenue
San Diego, CA 92117

Re: Response to Comments: Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND)
Piedras Grandes Road Closure Project
Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

Dear Mr. Donnelly:

Thank you for your comments regarding the above project. Your interest in this project is appreciated and it is hoped that this response will help to answer your questions regarding this project.

Comment 1: Your comments indicate that in conjunction with the road closure, an unobtrusive interpretive sign should be placed near the cultural area urging protection.

We agree that such a sign would provide additional protection to the site and it will be part of the project.

Comment 2: You comment that there are two areas used for camping along the road within the proposed closure area, that you support closing the area near the pictograph, but that the other area should be considered to remain open if cultural resources are not threatened.

In order to delineate the area proposed for closure, an extensive assessment of the status of the cultural resources in the area and the impacts from visitor use was completed in August 2006 by Dr. Joan Schneider, Associate State Park Archeologist. This document, *An Assessment of Visitor Impacts to Cultural Resources in the Piedras Grandes Area, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, California, and Recommendations for Management of Cultural Resources*, is discussed on p. 8 and pp. 19-28 of the Negative Declaration. This assessment determined the areas of damage and indicated for closure. Unfortunately, the jeep road itself runs through several significant cultural sites (see page 26 of the Negative Declaration).

Thank you again for your comments regarding this project and your support of our protective efforts.

Sincerely,

Gail Sevens
Acting Environmental Coordinator

Dice, Jim

From: Richard [58bird@cox.net]
Sent: Friday, January 25, 2008 5:48 AM
To: Dice, Jim
Cc: Ed Stovin
Subject: Piedras Grandes

Mr. Dice

I am Richard Jackson, President of the San Diego 4 Wheelers. I have read your report on the proposed closure of Piedras Grande Road closure. Section XIV in your report concludes that motorized vehicles should be banned from the area. I do not understand the reasoning behind that conclusion. The Discussion section on page 42 concludes that closure to camping in this area would be reasonable. I agree with this conclusion. This would eliminate the major cause of vandalism to the area of concern, which is extended stay in the area by humans.

Camping in the area appears to be the major problem. Transient presence of humans would not be eliminated by the banning of motor vehicles. Hikers, bicyclists, and horseback riders would be allowed to visit the area. The elimination of motor vehicles from the area would only have an adverse impact on those who are not physically able to hike or bike into the area.

I suggest that you reconsider your decision to ban motorized access and instead ban camping in the area. A re-evaluation of the area can be done after a reasonable length of time.

We in the Off Road community strongly support the preservation of our resources. Our Public Lands should be for all the public, not just for the physically fit.

Richard Jackson
SD4W



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Colorado Desert District
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Ruth G. Coleman, *Director*

March 4, 2008

Mr. Richard Jackson
SD4W
534 Hilo Way
Vista, CA 92081

Re: Response to Comments
Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND)
Piedras Grandes Road Closure Project
Anza Borrego Desert State Park

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Thank you for your comments regarding the above project. Your interest in this project is appreciated and it is hoped that the following responses will help to answer your questions and concerns regarding this project.

Comment 1: Your comments indicate that camping in the area appears to be the major problem impacting the cultural resources and that the project objectives could be met by banning camping but allowing the road to remain open.

While overnight camping is leading to impacts caused by campfires, other impacts directly involve vehicle use. Unfortunately, the road itself traverses multiple cultural sites and is causing direct damage via erosion and altering of drainage patterns. Further, there have been instances of vehicles parking on top of sensitive sites, as documented on page 23 of the Negative Declaration.

Vehicles are also the means of transportation into the area for excavation tools such as shovels, and out of the area for artifacts. Please see page 27 of the Negative Declaration for documentation of unauthorized excavation. Vehicles have also been used to transport in water caches and firewood, which have been placed in sensitive sites. Additionally, material brought in via vehicles has previously been left behind as trash on sensitive sites. Finally, a ban just on camping would be much more difficult to enforce than a ban in conjunction with the road closure.

Comment 2: You indicate that the road closure would impact individuals who are not physically able to hike or bike into the area.

As explained on page 41, the 1.3 mile segment of jeep road proposed for closure represents just 0.25 percent of accessible roadway for street-legal motorized vehicles within the park and 0.3 percent loss of road-side primitive camping opportunities within the park. Ample primitive camping opportunities exist in the area of the proposed

closure and throughout the park, providing opportunities to individuals accessing the areas via motorized vehicles.

Thank you again for your comments regarding this project.

Sincerely,

Gail Sevens
Acting Environmental Coordinator



San Diego County Archaeological Society, Inc.

Environmental Review Committee

15 January 2008

To: Mr. Jim Dice
Sr. Environmental Scientist
Colorado Desert District
California Department of Parks and Recreation
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, California 92004

Subject: Draft Negative Declaration
Piedras Grandes Road Closure Project

Dear Mr. Dice:

I have reviewed the subject DND on behalf of this committee of the San Diego County Archaeological Society.

Based on the information contained in the DND and initial study for the project, we agree that the project will have no adverse impacts but will, in fact, protect sensitive cultural resources that are currently being damaged. We believe that Parks has proposed a practical, reasonable solution that permits continued public access to Piedras Grandes by the public while preventing the type of damage that has resulted from casual overnight use of the area. The SDCAS Board of Directors therefore supports approval of this project.

Thank you for including SDCAS in the public review of this DND.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James W. Royle, Jr.", is written over the typed name.

James W. Royle, Jr., Chairperson
Environmental Review Committee

cc: SDCAS President
File



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Colorado Desert District
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Ruth G. Coleman, *Director*

March 4, 2008

Mr. James W. Royle, Jr.
Chairperson, Environmental Review Committee
San Diego County Archaeological Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 81106
San Diego, CA 92138-1106

Re: Response to Comments
Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND)
Piedras Grandes Road Closure Project
Anza Borrego Desert State Park

Dear Mr. Royle:

Thank you for your review of the Negative Declaration and for your comments regarding the above project. Your interest in and the support expressed by your Board of Directors for this project is appreciated.

Thank you for your determination, based on your review of the document, that the project will have no adverse impacts and will protect sensitive cultural resources that are currently being damaged.

Thank you again for your comments regarding this project and your support of our protective efforts.

Sincerely,

Gail Sevens
Acting Environmental Coordinator

Dice, Jim

From: John Stewart [jstewart@mac.com]
Sent: Friday, January 25, 2008 12:10 AM
To: Ed Stovin
Cc: John Stewart; Dice, Jim; 58bird@cox.net; meg@orba.biz; csprofera@cox.net
Subject: Re: Piedras Grandes

I can support Ed's position. Sorry, I do not have the time to pay close attention to the specific points of this proposed closure.

If someone has specific information, please speak up. I am tracking several issues and time is critical. Adding another means I need to depend on someone with specific knowledge.

That I can do.....

 John Stewart
 Natural Resource Consultant - CA4WDC; www.cal4wheel.com
 MUIRNet - Multiple Use Information Resource Network BLOG - www.muirnet.net
 President, Tierra del Sol 4WDC; www.tds4x4.com

On Jan 24, 2008, at 11:44 PM, Ed Stovin wrote:

Hi Jim, thank you for taking time to speak to me this afternoon. I am including Richard Jackson of the San Diego 4 wheelers, John Stewart of Tierra Del Sol 4 Wheel Drive Club, Meg Grossglass of SDORC and the Off-Road business Association and Chris Spofera of SDORC as recipients of this email. As you know, I am president of the San Diego Off-Road Coalition. SDORC believes in promoting responsible, well managed off-road recreation and we are concerned about the proposal to close the Piedras Grandes area to off-road vehicle travel. I understand the State Parks mandate to protect resources in its jurisdiction and personally believe the archaeological effects in the area should be protected. It was suggested to me by Richard Jackson to ask ABDSP to consider stopping camping in the area, but to continue to allow off-road vehicles access to the area. It is obvious from the information in the closure plan that virtually all the damage to the area resources came from people camping in the area, not driving to or from it. So, I would like ABDSP to consider going through with the camping closure, but hold off on banning vehicle access until it can be assessed that off-road vehicle use in the area also causes damage to resources there.

Thank you,
 Ed Stovin

Climb to the top of the charts! Play the word scramble challenge with star power. [Play now!](#)



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Colorado Desert District
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Ruth G. Coleman, *Director*

March 4, 2008

Mr. John Stewart
President
Tierra del Sol 4WDC
jestewart@mac.com

via electronic mail

Re: Response to Comments
Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND)
Piedras Grandes Road Closure Project
Anza Borrego Desert State Park

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Thank you for your comments regarding the above project. Your interest in this project is appreciated and it is hoped that the enclosed will help to answer your questions and concerns regarding this project.

Your comments indicate that while you did not have the opportunity to review the specific points of the proposed closure, you support the position outline by Ed Stovin in his email of Jan 24, 2008 to California State Parks. Enclosed please find a copy of the response to Mr. Stovin's comments.

Thank you again for your comments regarding this project.

Sincerely,

Gail Sevreus
Acting Environmental Coordinator

Encl.

Dice, Jim

From: Ed Stovin [motoed@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 24, 2008 11:45 PM
To: Dice, Jim
Cc: 58bird@cox.net; meg@orba.biz; jstewart@mac.com; csprofera@cox.net
Subject: Piedras Grandes

Hi Jim, thank you for taking time to speak to me this afternoon. I am including Richard Jackson of the San Diego 4 wheelers, John Stewart of Tierra Del Sol 4 Wheel Drive Club, Meg Grossglass of SDORC and the Off-Road business Association and Chris Spofera of SDORC as recipients of this email. As you know, I am president of the San Diego Off-Road Coalition. SDORC believes in promoting responsible, well managed off-road recreation and we are concerned about the proposal to close the Piedras Grandes area to off-road vehicle travel. I understand the State Parks mandate to protect resources in its jurisdiction and personally believe the archaeological effects in the area should be protected. It was suggested to me by Richard Jackson to ask ABDSP to consider stopping camping in the area, but to continue to allow off-road vehicles access to the area. It is obvious from the information in the closure plan that virtually all the damage to the area resources came from people camping in the area, not driving to or from it. So, I would like ABDSP to consider going through with the camping closure, but hold off on banning vehicle access until it can be assessed that off-road vehicle use in the area also causes damage to resources there.

Thank you,
Ed Stovin

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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Colorado Desert District
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Ruth G. Coleman, *Director*

March 4, 2008

Mr. Ed Stovin
President
San Diego Off-Road Coalition
7447 Salizar Street
San Diego, CA 92111

Re: Response to Comments
Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND)
Piedras Grandes Road Closure Project
Anza Borrego Desert State Park

Dear Mr. Stovin:

Thank you for your comments regarding the above project. Your interest in this project is appreciated and it is hoped that the following responses will help to answer your questions and concerns regarding this project.

Your comments indicate that camping in the area appears to be the major problem impacting the cultural resources and that the project objectives could be met by banning camping but allowing the road to remain open.

While overnight camping is leading to impacts caused by campfires, other impacts directly involve vehicle use. Unfortunately, the road itself traverses multiple cultural sites and is causing direct damage via erosion and altering of drainage patterns. Further, there have been instances of vehicles parking on top of sensitive sites, as documented on page 23 of the Negative Declaration.

Vehicles are also the means of transportation into the area for excavation tools such as shovels, and out of the area for artifacts. Please see page 27 of the Negative Declaration for documentation of unauthorized excavation. Vehicles have also been used to transport in water caches and firewood, which have been placed in sensitive sites. Additionally, material brought in via vehicles has previously been left behind as trash on sensitive sites. Finally, a ban just on camping would be much more difficult to enforce than a ban in conjunction with the road closure.

Thank you again for your comments regarding this project.

Sincerely,

Gail Sevens
Acting Environmental Coordinator